**Pre-reading Lesson Plan to**

**Preview Book Vocabulary**

**Objectives:**

1. Improve college readiness by enhancing vocabulary.
2. Improve comprehension of assigned reading.
3. In a 15-minute homework assignment, familiarize students with 20 well-selected words they will soon see in a novel.
4. Increase word awareness (to encourage life-long & immediate book-related increases in vocabulary).
5. Familiarize students with the format of vocabulary questions on ACT® and SAT®-type tests.\*

**National Standards:**

Without distracting from other class objectives, this assignment helps to meet *Common Core Vocabulary Acquisition and Use* standards specifically and *ELA Literacy* standards in general.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Time Required:**

about 15 minutes

**Materials:**

Computer, tablet, or smart phone with Internet access. Email, printer, or other method of showing completion to teacher. (See *Adaptations* such as paper quiz below. A library computer can also be used.)

**Student Procedures:**

1. Select a book at verbalworkout.com.
2. Select *Vocabulary List* and look at the detail of words that are not known well.
3. Return to book menu and select *Take Quiz* to answer the 20 questions.

(Leave the default of <i>Pre-Reading</i> which uses sentences tailored for optimal learning.)

1. Print, email, or show results to teacher.

**Why This Lesson Plan Works:**

Academic words in each book are ranked according to three main criteria:

1. How often they are used in the book.
2. Relative to the book's reading level, how commonly they are used generally.
3. How often they appear on review lists for ACT® & SAT®-type tests.\*

The first two criteria help to leverage natural repetition that assists vocabulary growth, while the third helps improve motivation.

Prior to reading the book, students see a sample sentence for each targeted word. Students need to select the correct definition for the word, prior to moving to the next word. Help is available.

This assignment increases student awareness of targeted words prior to students encountering the words in the authentic context of the book. At the same time, it helps students comprehend the book without interrupting the flow of the story.

After reading the book, a companion lesson plan reviews the same words. That quiz is identical to the preview quiz except that good sample sentences are chosen from the assigned book.

Because the assignments take only about fifteen minutes and are checked by the computer, they enhance natural vocabulary growth that accompanies reading without detracting from other lessons and aspects of literature. The homework meets best practices for incidental vocabulary instruction:

* a brief preview of the word
* encountering the word in context
* a deeper review of the word
* repetition

This approach is supported by this research:

1. It is widely agreed that increased vocabulary facilitates reading comprehension and both academic and vocational success.

Representative Citations:

Graves, M. (2006). *The Vocabulary Book: Learning and instruction.* (pp. 2-3). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Snow, Catherine E. (2002). Reading for understanding: toward a research and development program in reading comprehension. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education

1. After the 4th grade, the vast preponderance of vocabulary is learned incidentally while reading. Indeed a common refrain in education literature is that the single most important thing you can do to improve students’ vocabularies is to get them to read more.

Representative Citations:

Anderson, R.C., & Nagy, W.E. (1992, Winter). The vocabulary conundrum. American Educator, 16(4), 14-18, 44-47.

Cunningham, A.E., & Stanovich, K.E. (1998, Spring/Summer). What reading does for the mind. American Educator, 22 (1/2), 8-15.

Stahl, S.A. (1998). Four questions about vocabulary. In C.R. Hynd (Ed.), Leaning from text across conceptual domains (pp. 73-94). Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum.

1. Word consciousness (an awareness of and interest in words) is crucial to such vocabulary acquisition.

Representative Citations:

Graves, Michael F. (2006). The vocabulary book: learning and instruction, (pp. 7-8). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Scott, J.A., & Nagy, W.E. (2004). Developing word consciousness. In J.F. Baumann & E.J. Kame’enui (Eds.), Vocabulary instruction: Research to practice (pp.201-217). New York, NY: Guiford Press.

1. Incidental vocabulary instruction should be brief. It is best to introduce or briefly review the word prior to encountering it in reading, and then to review the word in greater depth after encountering it in context.

Representative Citations:

Beck, I.L., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L. (2008). Creating robust vocabulary: frequently asked questions and extended examples. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Graves, Michael F. (2006). The vocabulary book: learning and instruction, (pp. 20-23). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

1. If students are permitted to turn in additional word quizzes for books read independently: Allowing students to select their own books to read enhances motivation, deepens thinking, and improves comprehension.

Representative Citations:

Snow, Catherine E. (2002). Reading for understanding: toward a research and development program in reading comprehension. (pp.41-42). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Education.

Guthrie, J.T., & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M.L. Kamil, P.B. Mosenthal, P.D. Pearson, &r. Barr (Eds.), Handbook of reading research: Volume III (pp.403-422). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Miller, D. (2009). *The Book Whisperer*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons. This is a popular book by a teacher on the philosophy of reading instruction. It is not a formal study.

Verbalworkout.com provides a rich environment that encourages active exploration of words:

Below each quizzed word is a motivating description of why it was chosen. For example, is it commonly seen on ACT® & SAT®-type tests\*, or is the student likely to see it again and again?

Before or after a quiz, students can look at every instance of the word in the book, or can look at the word in sentences selected to exemplify use of the word. Students with specific interests can even use a picklist to search for word use in a subject area of interest. One student may like finding sample usage in *Wikipedia* while another prefers *Sports Illustrated*.

For many words, non-linguistic representations are also available. For example, the word concerto, has a link that permits the student to listen to a piano and orchestra play off of each other. The word translucent, provides a link with pictures of translucent objects. Any searches use Google's SafeSearch technology on "strict" to help assure words or images are appropriate.

One click links to such sites as vocabulary.com for audio pronunciation, Google's dictionary for synonyms, and Wikipedia when encyclopedic articles are appropriate.

**Adaptations:**

1. Teachers can print the quiz and have student’s take it on paper.
2. Assign the *Extra Credit* quiz for academically motivated students.
3. Students can take quizzes from books previously read to earn extra credit.
4. Students can be given extra points for using their words in writing assignments or finding examples of use.
5. Teachers can assign either the pre-reading or post-reading assignment instead of both.
6. Teachers can print word lists and let students write their own sample sentences.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. <https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/> (Link last checked on 5/31/24) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For this kind of assignment, the sentence would have to be meaningful to the student. For example, of the following two sentences that use the word *deride*, only the second is credit worthy:

   She was *derided*.

   She *derided* him for liking the movie.

   Note that any form of the word can be used in the sample sentence. For *deride*, acceptable forms would be *deride*, *derided*, *deriding*, *derides*, *derisive*, *derisively*, or *derision*.

   Many sample sentences can be found for each word at verbalworkout.com.

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